

2. Rural Industries

178 Generally speaking, it can be said that much less effort is put forth
438 in the countryside now toward home industries than was the case before the
540 war. In Nanahan making of products at home has declined to the point where
rather than being made for sale, they are made only for exhibit at the fair
given annually at the local primary school. Even here considerable urging
is required by the village officials, and entries are forthcoming only by an
appeal to pride in one's village's standing at the fair.

249 Sugar Presses and Mills

257 Okinawa has two modern western-style sugar refineries, one at Haebaru and one on the isle of Minami
Daitō. At the other end of the scale there are the some-400 horse-drawn
rotary mills. Between these there are perhaps a dozen or less mills which
utilize gasoline-powered motors and are geared to operate on a much larger
scale than the rotary presses.

471 In rebuilding the big mill at Tomoyose which had been destroyed in the
257 war, each family that owned stock in the mill contributed the labor of one person
461 per day of building. On a typical day they started work at eight, had a
fifteen-minute "break" at ten, and returned home for lunch for an hour at noon.
After an afternoon "break", the work continued until six. Breaks and resump-
tion of work were announced by pounding on an empty oxygen cylinder of large
dimensions. The only break I observed lasted for 24 minutes. Tea was served
to everyone, and the men sat around discussing how they would be able to pay
for the building---which was made of sandy limestone from Minatogawa---and
471 where they would borrow money. The sugar produced was to be sold to the Ag-
257 ricultural Federation in Naha, as is the sugar produced at the smaller mills.
However, the sugar was to be sold in 50 kin (66 pound) bags rather than in
100 kin barrels. The potential annual output was estimated at 15,000 bags, or
[433] approximately one-half the Tomoyose village production.

256 Kanegusuku Rice Mill

There is one small rice mill in Kanegusuku. All the
villagers who have rice land---or about 70% of the
families---utilize this mill for polishing. No one in the village uses the
[439] old-fashioned hand mill. The owner of the rice mill says that most of the
villagers cannot afford to pay cash for having their rice polished. Conse-
quently he takes as multure about two-thirds of one 'gō' from each 'shō' of
rice. This amounts to approximately six percent of their rice. The villagers
evidently trust him completely, for no one was seen standing around watching
while their rice was being polished.

The owner says that his machines are old and break down frequently.
Three machines are required for the whole process. This is not a full-time
job except during the harvesting periods. The young man who is owner regu-
larly works on his family's lands. All operation and maintenance are done by
him; he does not hire a helper even in the busiest times.

286 Mat-Making in Kanegusuku

433 The three-cornered sedge ('sankaku-1') is a reed
[178] of 'tatami omote' and 'goza' manufacture, the chief home industry of Kanegu-
suku. Production of the reed in Kanegusuku today is about one-tenth the pre-

178 In Kanegusuku, for example, mat weaving is still of some importance
 286 as a home industry. Where formerly nearly all of the houses were engaged in
 433 production of mats,
 today less than half are so engaged, and the acreage planted in sedge is but
 ten percent of the prewar level. The war caused the loss of many machines;
 increasing emphasis on food production has brought a conversion of sedge
 fields into paddies; access to the better markets in Japan is now more diffi-
 cult than before the war; it is felt to be too time-consuming and the young
 women today do not like this work.

Formerly there were a number of men in Kanegusuku who were able to
 construct the looms used in mat weaving. Today, however, no one constructs
 his own looms; instead, they are purchased from a manufacturer in Itoman.
 [463] This particular example is symptomatic of the general decline of do-it-
 yourself and the increasing reliance placed on specialists.

178 There are some encouraging signs of revival or new life in the manu-
 322 facture of Okinawan art objects. Okinawan lacquer ware, which is acknow-
 [322] ledged by some to be the world's finest, is being sold in large quantity to
 members of the occupation. The owner of a large pottery works in Naha told
 [323] the author that pottery from tombs is being collected to serve as models in
 restoring an older style and superior type of pottery. An Okinawan textile
 [286] technique known as biingata (Okinawan; in Japanese, 'Benigata') was virtually
 lost during the war, but this art is still being carried on by one Shuri
 family, and recent publicity and aroused interest seems likely to insure sur-
 vival.

Power and Machinery 178 Agricultural machinery has come into use quite
 407 recently on Okinawa. Pitts states that the labor-saving rice thresher first
 came into widespread use in the thirties. Older methods of flailing or rub-
 bing the rice over a mat, carvas, or stone surface were also observed as being
 in common use. In numerous instances it was brought out that wartime losses
 had necessitated a return to an earlier and cruder means of threshing.

The old-fashioned, hand-operated rice polisher has gone out of use in
 Kanegusuku, and all rice is now polished in the village rice mill which op-
 erates on a gasoline engine.

In many communities the gasoline-operated sugar mill has replaced the
 horse-powered mill. More important, however, is the fact that the small com-
 [257] munity mill remains popular, and the farmer is resistant toward using the
 large sugar factories (see chapter on Rural Economy).

178 Electricity, common only to the towns and cities before the war, is
 379 now found in many villages, and those who are without it are looking forward
 [373] to its installation. The kerosene lamps now in use in most rural homes cast
 a dim light and constitute a serious fire hazard in homes of thatch and wood.

The bulldozer has come into use as a means of opening new land and
 178 constructing rice fields. Farmers in Kanegusuku and Manahan made use of this
 406 method during the period of the authors' study of these two villages. Formerly
 this sort of work required the labor of a number of men over a considerable